I: Maes--145 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Take F133
Sakata F043

M 304 From Leopoldville to Kole the peoples know and practice tattooing. This varies, however, from one region to another in motif and design, the symmetry of application, its extensiveness, and the manner of execution.

T 304 Among the Bezeke and Banfumungu, we noted two distinct tattoonings: that of the men and that of the women. [188]

For the men, the face is covered with striated, parallel lines,

Fig. 110. Tribal Tattooing Executed by a Man, Wadia Tribe.

Fig. 111. Ornamental Tattooing Executed by a Woman, Wadia Tribe.

irregular, slightly concave, shallow, and covering the cheeks from the temples to near the chin. For the women, there is no facial tattooing, but the abdominal region is symmetrically covered with small lines or elongated dots in relief, placed side by side and covering the whole region extending from the pit of the stomach to the lower abdomen.

The males are tattooed by simple incisions, usually made at the age of seven or eight as manhood draws near. Women are tattooed at all ages.

M 304 B32 Prior to our [Ed., European] penetration of the region, a young girl was tattooed before puberty, according to the information we obtained. There was a twofold reason for this: to satisfy

[text continues on p. 147]

1: Mam--147 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32

304 B2 [111 291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291 301 304 142]

Fig. 113. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Tschima Region. Tattoo, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

304 B3

certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Batéke, Banfommungo, Babomo, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

291 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to
834 other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

834 2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom
514 is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

135 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty
132 and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

515 4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless,
835 especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

304 512 wishing to commit myself on the reason for this custom, it is a fact that a Nkundó woman will refuse to marry a man who has not been circumcised. Consequently, all the natives want to undergo this operation. That is the reply given by the natives when we asked about the reason for circumcision. When we pushed the inquiry further, they added that the women abhor the deposits that form under the foreskin. I mention this explanation for what it's worth. Nevertheless, this may really be the reason that impels them.

In any case circumcision would seem to have no religious or initiatory significance.

3. Tattooing

304 532 Two kinds of tattoos exist among the Nkundó: purely ornamental tattoos and sexual tattoos. (2) The latter are to be found only

[419]

2. I will not discuss tribal tattoos because these do not seem to exist among the Nkundó. The reasons for tattooing vary from people to people and from group to group. It is for this reason that they are a distinctive mark. But that does not mean that such is their purpose. The distinctions apparent among the tattoos of various tribes are not an objective but a consequence, as are, for example, the variations among national costumes in Europe. Moreover, the contacts of our people in peace or war have extended by and large only to neighboring clans or tribes, who use the same type of ornamentation as they did. And in these encounters dialect differences serve as a much better means of identification.

on women. The [67] designs are located on portions of the body surrounding the sex organs and even on the outside of the latter.

What brings the Nkundó to practice this second form of tattooing? First of all the following considerations must be taken into account: since a woman is by nature more eager than the men to appear beautiful, it seems altogether appropriate that her tattoos should be more abundant, more elaborate than the men's. And since coquetry is a form of the desire to appeal to the opposite sex and since members of the latter are susceptible to it, the tattoos attract them. Therefore, too, the women's tattoos have been most elaborated on those parts of her body which are nearest the sex organs.

The reason for the existence of these tattoos may be that they add additional pleasure to intercourse. (1) This explanation does not

1. This is the explanation given, for example, by Dr. J. Maes in Notes sur les Populations des Bassins du Kasai, de la Lukenie et du lac Léopold II (Notes Concerning the Peoples of the Kasai and Lukenie Basins and of Lake Leopold II), p. 189 ff.

seem entirely implausible. I have never been able to obtain a clear-cut or direct confirmation of this point, but it is a fact that a man sometimes makes malicious remarks to his wife if she is not sufficiently tattooed to his taste ("You, your body is as smooth as a man's"). This fact lends considerable validity to the explanation given. The persistence of these tattoos in spite of modern dress also makes it convincing, although the evidence is not entirely conclusive, considering that its significance is not diminished by the psychological explanation that follows.

The figures are placed in such a way that they converge toward the sex organ. Moreover, the men see the tattooing at some time or other, either in its entirety or in part. Clothing may cover them more or less, but at some time for one reason or another the woman uncovers them, if only partially. [68] The imagination works on what is seen and quite naturally arouses sexual desire. The accuracy of this psychological explanation can be verified even in Europe: one is tempted particularly by what one has only glimpsed.

and "modern" fashions, as well as some ancient ones, take this into account. In the next paragraph, moreover, we will note analogous phenomenon.

Both of the explanations given can be defended, since each has its value. But it seems to me preferable not to oppose them but rather to bring them together, as they probably are in the thinking of the native.

It should also be noted that a man never performs the operation of making a sexual tattoo on a woman, although a woman may indeed operate on a man. And finally it should be mentioned that the specific terms designating these tattoos are considered as obscenities.

The practice of tattooing is decreasing at the present time. Many boys are already without tattoos. But very few girls lack them; among them the fad has not disappeared. Some even have themselves tattooed without the knowledge of their parents and in spite of their opposition. Among the Blacks, as everywhere in the world, fashion is deeply rooted because it is natural. But the designs of the tattoos are now becoming smaller. It seems to me that this change is due, not to a reaction against tattooing as such, but rather to a modification of the style. For tattooing is a real fashion, and like all fashions it is subject to change and development. Nowadays there is a tendency to imitate the designs of other peoples of the Congo. Elsewhere, as among the Injifi, for example, an internal evolution may be observed, although it is occurring under foreign influence. The evolution is taking place chiefly in the face motifs, while those of the body are beginning to be omitted. But the sexual tattoos do not seem to be disappearing. [68]

4. Bead Belts

From an early age the Nkundó child is adorned with a belt of trading beads. Before the coming of the Europeans this decoration made its appearance only towards puberty and was restricted to girls. Nowadays, many men also adorn themselves in this manner. And since it is now easier to obtain the beads, women are no longer with a single string but wear several in assorted colors. They add smaller ones below the knee.

According to what I have been told, this type of ornament may also have a sexual significance. Normally -- and this statement is applicable only to the present time -- the beads are entirely covered by clothing and are visible only on a few occasions. If a large number of strings (as many as six, eight, or ten) or very many beads are worn, attention may be attracted to them because there will be a bulge in the clothing worn over them. Their sound will reveal their presence during a race or a dance. And according to my informants, that is enough to awaken passion. Making an allusion to the beads and especially touching them deliberately is considered as an invitation. For her part, a woman sometimes rubs them together in her fingers so that they will make their characteristic noise and thus attract a man's attention and arouse his interest.

The preceding does not mean that simply the wearing of the beads is necessarily intended for a bad purpose. Not only must such an intention be excluded in the case of serious persons, especially if they are elderly and content themselves with wearing a single string, seldom a second one to support the first. But there is also the possibility that a young Black beauty may adorn herself with ten or more strands out of sheer vanity, so that the whole world may see that she has so many. [70]

Furthermore, it has been shown that attention to appearance is not necessarily directed to another person. Though that may be generally true, many people like to dress for the pleasure of being well dressed, and girls who never dream of an adventure may still enjoy wearing pretty undergarments. This desire for adornment for its own sake can, no doubt, explain the belts, as well as other embellishments on more than one Nkundó woman.

We should add that those who adhere to the theory that the tattoos have an immediate sexual influence could apply such a theory here as well.

5. Depilation

All Nkundó of both sexes practice depilation of the genital organs and even the armpits. The natives believe that the hair growing

833 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the
826 great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banfingɛ́, the daughter of Ilɔkɔ [96] Is'Ɛfekɛlɛ of Lofelɛ́ (Bongfili), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bɔnyɛka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpɛ́nda ɛa Nkɔtɔnkalɛ went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banfingɛ́'s corpse buried in the nsululu. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

832 Kissing between persons of opposite sex is unknown. Embraces occur on the other hand but not in public; they must be considered as preparation to approaching intercourse. (1) An extraordinarily strong

1. See above, Part I, Article III.

passion sometimes leads lovers to engage in more intimate kissing, usually as a prelude to normal intercourse. Although some natives are not shocked by such practices, more responsible people consider them improper. [96]

Article VI. Vices "Contra Naturam"

838 ### 1. Male homosexuality

Homosexuality has been known among the Nkundó since time immemorial, among men as well as women.

Among the former it took the form of sodomy in the past, with one particular characteristic -- for which I do not know the explanation, that is, only the younger of the two men could take the active role. Nowadays among the youth, homosexuality has begun to take on a different form: the boys who practice it lie down in the positions of husband and wife. It is reported that sometimes one of the two says from time to time to his accomplice, "This is what I do with your sister." Is this an indication that here we have homosexuality only in action but not in feeling (in effectu not in affectu, as the moralists say)?

Homosexuality among the Nkundo does not seem to be the result of a special inclination for this vice; rather it has always been a last resort open to those who could not find a natural outlet for their passions. Although we cannot approve of this depravation of instinct either on rational grounds or in adherence to the faith, we must admit that it was more excusable among these peoples whose social organization was disadvantageous to many young people. At the present time there is already much less sodomy because it has become easier to get married. As for the new form of homosexuality, it may be observed especially in places where men are kept rigidly apart from relations

835 encounter it only in connection with magical practices and sorcery
759 (bonɛ, plural bonɛ), for which it is the nsimbo, that is, the condition without which the bonɛ would lack efficacy. If the nsimbo is not observed, the bonɛ turns against its owner and, by a reversal of its effect (bowengano), brings death to the latter. Therefore the interested parties submit to these degrading requirements despite their natural repugnance. Depending on the case, incest with the mother, the daughter, or the sister is required. The first of these eventualities is the most repugnant to our natives. Though it goes altogether against the grain to do so, the mother submits to this ignominy to save the life of her foolhardy and greedy son.

[859] The nsimbo of incest does not exist in all bonɛ. It even seems to have been absent from the bonɛ which are ancient and purely Nkundó. It is found primarily in the big modern bonɛ, which have been imported from other peoples or invented on the spot since colonization. (1)

1. See Kapteijn, in Congo, 1922, Vol. I, p. 534.

Article VIII. Love Philters

• 852 The Nkundó are familiar with two love philters, the efɔndɛ and the bontɛlɛ. Other modern bonɛ may produce the same effect in part or secondarily. Here [101] we will only deal with the first two, which are "pure" and ancient love philters.

The love philters (bonɛ w'ɛlangyɛ) serve to gain the heart of a young girl as much as to entice a married woman away from her husband.

1. Efɔndɛ

Efɔnde (1) is a common charm. Anyone can procure it from the

1. Efɔnde is often used as a synonym of elangyɛ in its sexual meaning.

maker in consideration of the appropriate payment, of course. Various kinds of efɔndɛ exist, diffesing as to the ingredients used, the manner

132 in which they are manufactured, and consequently in the way they
[126] are used. The most common ingredients are certain leaves mixed with red rouge (ngôlo) and a sort of lichen which forms red stains on the bark of certain species found in the forest; the whole thing is
[125] carefully wrapped in a small fur (especially the skin of the small feline iyoli).

The charm is hidden under a slat of the bed where the desired one takes her nightly rest. Because this is done an ardent love for the owner of the charm will grow in her heart. Or it may be placed somewhere in a hut; then the desired woman is called in, the owner of the charm takes her arm, and the *elôndé* immediately "turns her heart." Or, still without the woman's knowledge, the charm is thrown into the fire where she cooks. If she begins to sneeze when she returns home, this is a sign that the smoke charged with mysterious emanations from the philter has pepetrated through her nostrils all the way to her heart and filled it with ardent love for the Adonis in question.

The *elôndé* is considered an ilôlo, that is, a subjugation. *Elôndé ekôka bâmato*, "the *elôndé* masters women, has power over
[124] them." The substance which prevents the *elôndé* from being efficacious is the bokai, a kind of sour vegetable. [102] The owner of the philter must abstain from eating it. For the bokai cause vomiting and if he ate any the woman would in the same manner eject her love and thus make the *bonsé* ineffective.

2. *Bonsélé*

Contrary to the *elôndé*, the *bonsélé* is a love philter which is not available to everyone: it is a charm only for dancers of the iyaya. This does not mean that all the artists who perform this dance have it, but they alone are acquainted with it. The material basis of the *bonsélé*, as of most Nkundó *bonsé*, are the leaves of certain plants.

The efficacy of the *bonsélé* is infallible. It acts not only on the beloved one, but also on any woman who involuntarily or on purpose fulfills the condition necessary to its operation. That is, as soon as a woman's head touches the arm of the possessor of the *bonsélé*, her heart is moved in his favor; should she be married, her love for her

● 532 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

534 When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet- [93] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," soɔja bɛ̃mono, "looking for a woman," asa bɛ̃mono. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombɛ́ɔ́ (or boombɛ́ in among the Inɔ́lɔ́).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ndanga tshokɔ́ (tshokumbɛ́lɛ) la wɛ̃́lɛ́, "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "tshɔlanga wɛ́ ngɔ́' tshɔ́, "I love you also," or more frequently, "olakɛ́ ɔ́ wɛ́, "as you wish," jɛ́ɛ́ ɔ́ lɔ́kɔ́, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95] [574]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

534 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her 93 mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

especially very early in the morning at the crowing of the cock.(1)

1. The natives also use this means to call their children who long ago left for the "lowlands" and whose return they ardently desire.

If the one who is called does not return, the charm will take revenge either on her or on her lover, depending on the desire of the person operating it. Another intervention on his part is then required, however, and it varies according to the form used. Note that according to the native view it is impossible for the wife not to hear the call, no matter how far away she may be. If she does not return, it is because she is being obstinate and deserves to be punished.

The spirit of vengeance alone is involved in:

2) The ngondé. This charm comes from the Coquilhatville region or even further away. The word ngondé is the Lolinga form of the Lonkundó word nkondé, which means "gavial." The teeth of this reptile actually play a part in its composition. It is used to punish any thief by death. Therefore it has been declared effective against anyone who tries to seduce the wife of another. It will cause the culprit's feet to swell and to open with pus. Like the above practices, this one has not yet crossed Momboyo.

Such usages like many others have therefore been recently introduced. Before the arrival of Europeans in these parts, only love philters were known. However, it is easily understandable that the Nkundó gladly and confidently received these new practices which are so useful -- in their opinion -- and operate in a domain of capital importance for which colonization has deprived them of their ancient sanctions and means of prevention. [417]